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Q1 Contact Information

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Q9 Project Title

Driving Engagement and Building the Sustainer Prospect Pool in the Absence of Pledge

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Q10 What was the overall goal of project, problem it sought to solve or opportunity it sought to leverage? (suggested word count 100-250)

Engagement Campaign, "Cozy Up with WCNY"

WCNY has been pledge-free on TV for more than ten years, and 2018 marks our first year as a fully pledge-free FM provider as well. WCNY sees pledge as an interruption to the content we're committed to delivering, and as such, disruptive to our mission as a media provider. Admittedly, pledge is not without its benefits in fundraising and in its ability to drive engagement and cultivate a sense of kinship between stations and the communities they serve. The goal of this campaign was to engender these benefits in the absence of pledge.

The primary objective of our Cozy Up campaign was to strengthen online engagement as part of a larger initiative to redirect revenue streams from pledge (phone banks) to online giving. Our intention is to build and strengthen relationships online in order to effectively solicit online and via email.

A secondary effort was made to engage our local community through a free WCNY event, which featured our FM hosts. The event served to deepen WCNY's presence as a community partner and sought to encourage a sense of familiarity between WCNY's hosts and the local community in attendance, as well as the online community who observed or participated via social media.

Knowing that a strong sustainer base is crucial to our station's financial health in a world without pledge, the only "asking" that was incorporated into the campaign was a soft sustainer push as part of our on-air and online messaging. A new Thank You item was introduced and marketed specifically toward members who joined as ongoing monthly supporters of WCNY.

Q11 Describe the activity, what it achieved, and why it was successful. (suggested word count 200-400)

Campaign revolved around two primary activities:

a) Social Media Dialogue: We hosted a Facebook conversation encouraging community members to share how they choose to 'cozy up' during the long northeast winter. We asked people to share their stories and photos on our Facebook page, and we commented on each post, driving conversation about content when possible. Those who commented and liked the post were eligible to win a one-night stay at any Embassy Suites worldwide--a prize donated by one of our members. Link to Facebook Post: <https://bit.ly/2KzTIn6>

b) Free Community Event: We partnered with the Syracuse Department of Parks and Recreation and with a local restaurant to host a free night of public ice skating and tasty treats. The event was held at an outdoor ice rink just blocks from our station in the heart of downtown Syracuse, located over the historic Erie Canal, which cut a main artery through the city in the 1800's and early 1900's. In an effort to drive attendance and provide a free winter-alternative to families, the skate night event was scheduled during the city's annual Winterfest as well as during the region's winter school recess. Our FM hosts were featured as emcees and curators of the evening's playlist. Additional staff was in attendance to help document the event, hand out membership materials, and hit the ice with the more than 350 community members who attended. Link to some event images on Facebook: <https://bit.ly/2wd2iVZ>

Promotion of the campaign took place across platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as through our website, TV, radio, and email.

a) Marketing featured community members and staff as part of our work to build station-familiarity in the absence of pledge. Station hosts and employees were featured in email and online promotions, and our FM hosts were intentionally chosen to host our free community event. Campaign email example: <https://bit.ly/2rIGYYK>

b) Interactive promotional materials such as WCNY logo-branded winter hats, signs, stickers, and a large social media frame for community members to take photos in were utilized and heavily documented on social media. We also introduced our new winter logo hat Thank You item as an incentive to new members who joined as ongoing monthly supporters. Example of campaign and sustainer messaging: <https://bit.ly/2JSI6dO>

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Q12 Tell us any metrics or benchmarks that show the success of project. Please consider quantitative and qualitative data. (suggested word count 100-250)

Results and where we go from here

Our free event was attended by more than 350 community members, many of whom shared their experiences within their own online circles and with us directly. Between February 12 - 28, we gained 160 new Facebook followers, a three-fold increase over a typical month. This is notable because 'following' was not a requirement of the Facebook contest we held. During this same time period 289 people 'liked' our post, and 79 people shared it, placing it among the top three all-time posts for WCNY in both categories.

Our February Cozy Up campaign sought to position our station to raise funds and build engagement in place of FM pledge. Increasing our online following with engagement campaigns like Cozy Up grows our prospect list, which is crucial when seeking to redirect giving from phone bank to web in a post-pledge environment. For example, in March we leveraged the increase in social media following with a March Media Madness online bracket. The quiz was taken 750 times and captured 300 new email addresses for our prospect pool. These new email addresses are now part of an e-marketing campaign to promote ongoing engagement around content and promotion of Passport benefits. As a result of new member sustainer messaging and promotion of our new member sustainer premium, our February sustainer revenue saw a 97.5% increase year-over-year.

As we continue to develop pledge-free fundraising, projects like Cozy Up will be vital to community engagement and prospect growth. Through Cozy Up, and campaigns that similarly drive engagement, forge new relationships, and deepen existing relationships across platforms, our membership team is more prepared to successfully fundraise around content and community. The ability to do this without pledge breaks that interrupt our programming is a win for us and for our community.

Q13 Tell us how the project leveraged national or local content (primetime, KIDS, pop-out, etc). (suggested word count 100-250)

Our FM hosts widely promoted the free community event on-air, promising an evening of hand-selected classical music. The free community Cozy Up event featured classical music curated by our FM hosts and in promotion of classical programming on our FM channel. Likewise, we were cognizant to steer the online Facebook conversation toward WCNY and PBS content when appropriate.

Leveraging the prospect growth resulting from February's Cozy Up, we then engaged viewers in an online March Media Madness bracket that asked people to vote for their favorite PBS and WCNY programs. Utilizing the results of that bracket, we're now focused on an email acquisition campaign to promote content via Passport, and on creating new online engagement opportunities surrounding content – like our yet-to-be released Antiques Roadshow 'how good are your appraisal skills' quiz.

Q14 Do you have any supporting materials or items to upload? (optional) **No**